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ABSTRACT

The document presents a series of 14 scripts focusing on families with disabled children, written in English for radio broadcast in translation to rural village areas in Pakistan. Intended to educate the public concerning disabilities and how families can help their handicapped children participate as fully as possible in community life, the format typically consists of an informal conversation between a rehabilitation counselor and parents, village leader, school headmaster, or disabled adult. Script titles are as follows: (1) "One in Ten Is Disabled," (2) "The Mentally Retarded Child," (3) "People Who Have Fits," (4) "Physically Disabled Child (Following Polio)," (5) "The Blind Child," (6) "Blind Young Men," (7) "The Deaf Child: Diagnosis and General," (8) "Deaf Child (Speech Development)," (9) "Program for the Mentally Retarded Child," (10) "Children with Cerebral Palsy," (11) "Speech Problems and Behavior Difficulties," (12) "Cause and Prevention of Disabilities," (13) "Going to School," and (14) "Round Up" (a summary of the concepts and information presented in previous broadcasts). Brief appendices present notes on script adaptation and presentation, as well as a vignette of the role of the rehabilitation specialist. (JW)

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REHABILITATION BROADCASTS FOR RURAL AREAS

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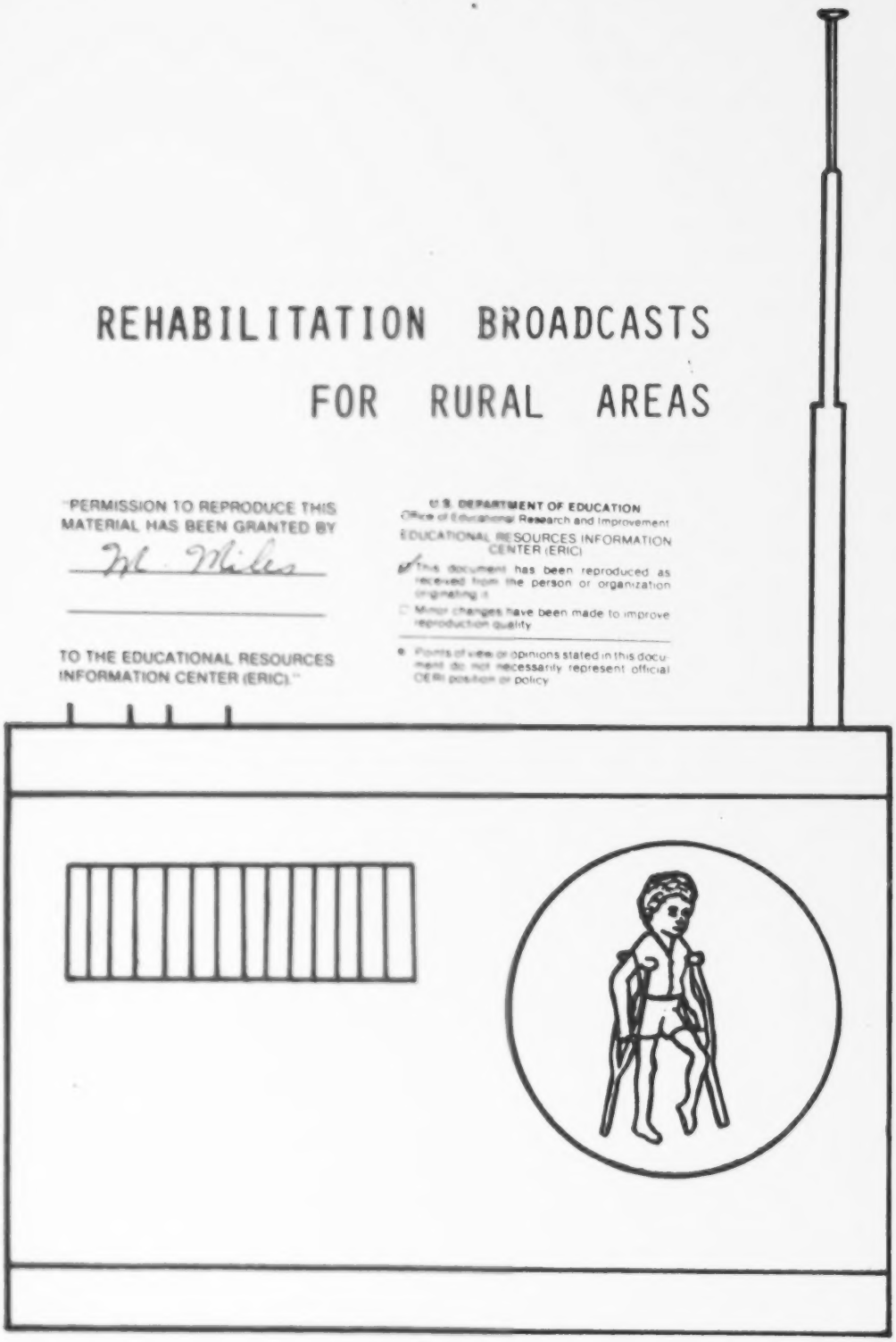

EC 192148

REHABILITATION BROADCASTS

FOR RURAL AREAS

These radio scripts were written in 1984 for broadcasting in translation to Pakhtun villages. For disabled persons in such villages, specialist rehabilitation skills and facilities are non-existent. That is also the situation for about 70% of all the disabled people in the world. Financial margins within families are very limited. The broadcasts are intended, therefore, to be congruent with these resource constraints, while appealing to the common sense and practical wisdom of the audience. Perceptions about disability that are commonly found in economically backward areas are discussed incidentally.

Reactions from colleagues in Asia, Africa and Latin America have been uniformly positive, with some useful suggestions and constructive criticism. I am grateful to David Werner, Rafiq Jaffer, Frederic Leighton, John Bavington, Yvonne Frizzell and Caroline Arnold for formulating some specific suggestions for improvements. I appreciate also the help of my professional colleagues in the North West Frontier, Margie Kulsoom, Farhat Rashid, Louise Auret and Christine Miles, who read and commented on these scripts in earlier drafts.

The series may have a wider potential audience, with adaptation for local conditions - some scripts have already been used in Swahili, French and Arabic and have influenced programs broadcast in Nepali. Interested persons are most welcome to make any use of these scripts, as written or in modified form, by duplication, broadcast, cassette recording, publication or any other method. I would be glad to know how the material has been used, especially if feedback has been received from rural listeners.

Financial aid for printing from the Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation, and the assistance of the International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap in disseminating these scripts, is much appreciated.

November 1986

M. Miles
Mental Health Centre
Peshawar, Pakistan

SCRIPTS

1) One in Ten is Disabled

2) The Mentally Retarded Child

3) People Who Have Fits

4) Physically Disabled Child (Following Polio)

5) The Blind Child

6) Blind Young Man

7) The Deaf Child : Diagnosis and General

8) Deaf Child (Speech Development)

9) Program for the Mentally Retarded Child

10) Children with Cerebral Palsy

11) Speech Problems and Behaviour Difficulties

12) Cause and Prevention of Disabilities

13) Going to School

14) Round Up

Appendices : 1) Notes on Adaptation and Presentation

2) "Twisting the Professional's Arm"

No. 1 : ONE IN TEN IS DISABLED

Counsellor : Out of ten fingers and thumbs on your two hands, is each one equally big and strong ? Of course not ! Most people have one finger that is smaller and weaker than all the rest : the little finger on the left hand. Does that mean we should chop off the small and weak finger ? Not so ! It surely serves its purpose along with all the other parts of the body.

One out of ten is especially small and weak. And that goes for children too. All over the world, one child out of every ten children has a disability. Some children are physically disabled :- maybe their legs don't work, or one side of the body is paralysed. For other children the problem is that they are blind or deaf. Then there are some children who are not able to learn things in the normal way. Sometimes we see a big boy who still speaks like a baby or who has not learnt to tie his shoe laces or button his shirt. We say that these children are "mentally retarded".

Because these disabled children have some special difficulties in life, does that mean we should ignore them, hide them away or mock them ? By no means ! On the contrary, if such a child belongs in our family or in our community, it is our special responsibility to care for and train that child. Just like the fingers on our hands, we do not hide one of them away simply because it fails to match the size and strength of the others. All the ten fingers appear together, playing their part in everyday life.

In the same way, if you have a child who is weaker because of her disability, she should still take part in everyday life as far as possible. Many famous people have suffered a disability themselves, or have had a disabled child. One President of the U.S.A. was physically disabled during his term of office, and he used a wheelchair. Another U.S. President had a mentally retarded sister. The President of Pakistan at this moment has a daughter who is deaf, and he makes no secret of the fact. It can happen to a big, wealthy family or to a poor, small family, to have a disabled member.

All disabled people have one thing in common. Whatever their disability, they all agree on one point : while it is a sad thing to be blind, crippled or whatever, a far worse thing is to be rejected by one's family, pushed away and scorned by the neighbours. Each person suffering a disability has the same point to make : I am a complete person. I am Mohammed Ali, I am Razia Begum, I am Nur Jehan. If my legs don't work or my hearing is weak, it doesn't mean that I am only half a person. I am a complete person. Do not reject or despise me.

Even more this is the case with a growing child who suffers from a disability. Every child who is growing up wants to please his parents and to win their approval. In order to grow up with a well-balanced mind and personality, and to develop a good moral character, all children need the encouragement and approval of adults, whether of their parents or of their uncles and aunts, their neighbours, the local leaders and religious teachers. By means of such approval and encouragement the growing child learns what is acceptable and right behaviour. She learns also to avoid doing things that cause anger and annoyance to family and neighbours.

Now imagine the situation of the disabled child. What does he hear from his parents, if they have not thought carefully ? He hears them lamenting and complaining about him. "Oh," they say, "Shakil is crippled, he can't walk, how will he ever come to earn his living ? He is not much use for anything." "Alas", they complain, "Little Najma has lost her eyesight, she can neither help her mother in the house nor can she go to school. Who will marry her when she grows up ?" The deaf child or the mentally retarded one sees the neighbours shaking their heads or laughing at her.

All these reactions by the adults are very hurtful for a disabled child. She feels that she has failed to pleased her parents. She learns that the neighbours do not like her. She is not accepted by the local community. This is a crushing burden to load onto a child who is disabled or retarded. Of course, people do not purposely try to crush such a child. They do it thoughtlessly. It is a result of a failure to think, a failure to understand the child's point of view.

What is to be done ? We can see one pair of hands with a small weak finger pushed away or crushed down by the fingers next to it, while the other fingers wrangle with each other and twist around arguing and snapping ! Nothing of any use will be done by that pair of hands ! Let's look at a sensible pair of hands instead. All the fingers and thumbs are working together, each according to its strength and place. Now we see some useful work being done !

If you have a child who suffers from a disability, or if you know of an adult person who is disabled in your village or street, try to look at them in this way. First of all, that child or adult is a complete person, even if part of the body does not work properly. Secondly, that person has the same needs as any other person : to belong to his family, and to be loved and accepted by his relatives; to have food, drink, clothing and shelter; to learn some trade or job by which to earn his daily bread and contribute to the common good. Even if one sense or part of the body is missing, there are many things that a disabled person is capable of doing. If she is given some encouragement and help at the start, she will find her place in the community.

In the broadcasts following this one we will be looking at the special problems and questions about the main types of disability. We will be talking with families who have a deaf child, a physically disabled child, a blind child or a mentally retarded child. We will discuss the sort of actions the parents can take to help in each case, and also some ways to prevent children from getting a disability.

We will also look at some other common problems, such as the child who has fits, the child who stammers or cannot say her words properly, and the child who wets his bed every night. These are all common problems experienced by children all over the world. Some of the problems cannot be cured, but all of them can be relieved to some extent. For every one of them the solution begins when the big strong fingers on each hand decide to accept and help the small and weak finger.

No. 2 : THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

Counsellor : When parents are first told that their child is mentally retarded they often do not know what it means. This week the parents of Tariq have come to ask some questions. I first saw them a month ago and they told me about Tariq as follows :

[Father's Voice] "Tariq is very weak in his mental ability, compared to our other children. He is six years old now, but acts more like a baby. He says only a few words, and cannot put on his clothes without help. We tell him everything twenty times but still he does not understand. Sometimes he flies into a rage about nothing. Our next child is only three, but already he can do more than Tariq. When Tariq was very small he had a severe fever for a week, and although he recovered he has never made much progress since then. Is there any medicine to make his brain work faster ?"

[Cllr.] Well, I examined Tariq carefully and it was clear that he is mentally retarded. I talked to the parents about mental retardation, but at that time they were not ready to hear, because they were too upset. Now we will talk some more.

Father : Respected Counsellor, when you told us that he is mentally retarded we could not really take it in. We did not understand the advice you gave us. Now we have had time to think about it we would be grateful if you could tell us again what we can expect from Tariq and whether anything can be done.

Cllr : By all means ! Mental retardation is a permanent condition. It is not an illness that might be cured. Medicines may help with some of Tariq's difficult behaviour, but they will never make him normal. Even the best qualified doctors cannot cure him. There is no point in wasting money on expensive treatments. His mind will not develop as fast or as fully as that of other children, and he will always seem younger than other children of the same age.

There are different levels of mental retardation : some retarded children can do less than Tariq, while others can do more. It is simply a fact of human life that out of every hundred babies born, one or two are mentally retarded. Some babies are born to wealth, some are born to poverty. Some are clever, others have weak brains. It is not always the rich and clever who lead the happiest life. The best advice is to treat Tariq as normally as possible, and see how he turns out.

Mother : But what are we to do with him ? It's not normal to have a boy like that. There must be something we can do to help !

Cllr : Certainly, there are many ways you can help Tariq. He has a special need to be loved by his family. Love and affection will help him to feel that he is worth something and will bring out the best in him. But if he is teased or rejected, he will become unhappy and destructive. So give him as much affection as you give to his brothers and sisters. Make sure he receives his equal share of gifts and treats as his brothers and sisters. Make it clear to him, and to everyone else, that you are not ashamed of him.

At the same time, this does not mean letting him do whatever he wants to do ! The mentally retarded child learns things very slowly so it is important for discipline to be consistent. Rules for your child should be the same every day. His grandparents, uncles and cousins should also apply the same rules to him. It is better not to chop and change, however much fuss Tariq makes and however sorry people feel for him. In the long run it is far better for him to learn how to behave properly. When he does so, be sure to reward him. Tell him what a good boy he is as soon as he obeys you.

When you take your meals, that is a good time for Tariq to learn new words and good behaviour. He will be eager to get his food and will make a greater effort to do what you want. Take every chance to talk to Tariq in a straight-forward, ordinary way. You should use normal words, not too fast, and ask questions of him and help him make his answers. Let him listen to the radio. Let him join in singing songs. Say prayers aloud with him.

Every child needs the chance to learn from his surroundings, to handle different things, to talk about what he sees and does. Ordinary things that you have around the house can help him to learn. For example, let him play with a bucket of water and some tin mugs, pouring water from one to another. Give him a cooking pot and show him how to drum on it with a small stick. Let him practise tying knots in a piece of string. He will need to try these things 20 or 30 times, when another child would learn them after only 2 or 3 times. Take him to the bazar and talk to him about everything there is to see. He should always accompany you on family outings, weddings and visiting relatives. Whenever he behaves well, or when he learns a new word, always praise him straight away. Then he will be encouraged to learn some more.

Having a mentally retarded child can be a strain for the whole family, especially the mother. Everyone may become irritable, and Tariq's brothers and sisters may become jealous because he takes up more of your time. Make sure they do not tease him or mock him. The wise parent will give special attention to all the other children.

Mother : Yes, but how long will this go on for ? What will happen when he is grown up ?

Cllr : That is not an easy question to answer. Much depends on how well you succeed in teaching Tariq in your normal everyday life now. Certainly he will never be a well-educated man when he grows up. It is likely that he will always need some help in managing his affairs. But if he receives enough loving care and encouragement now as a child, he should be able to learn enough, little by little, to make himself useful and acceptable as an adult.

Mother : Will he be able to get married and have children ?

Cllr : That is difficult to tell, because each person develops differently. Tariq is 6 years old now, and who can tell what he will be when he is 26 ! But it is possible that he could marry and have children of normal ability. He would need a very helpful girl to marry him :- find him such a wife, a little older than usual, maybe 20 or 22 years old.

As a general rule, you should try to treat Tariq in as normal and ordinary a way as possible all through his childhood and growing up. Don't do everything for him, if there are things he could do for himself. It will take longer to start with, and you may lose patience with him, but in the long run it will help him to learn more. Suppose he has some difficulty putting on his shirt. Let him get as far as he can before you help him. Then you help him just with the difficult part. Then leave him to finish by himself. Praise and reward him for everything he does by himself. Avoid teasing or fussing over the things he has not yet learnt.

Father : Respected Counsellor, it takes so long for him to learn even the simplest things. He does not seem to know any more now than he did a year ago.

Cllr : What you say is perfectly true. There is one thing you can do about it : keep a record of what Tariq can actually do, and then you will begin to see that he is making progress, even if only slowly. Try to get it written down every month exactly what he can do. Another way is to make it a family game. Everyone thinks of all the words Tariq can use, and calls out each one. You put one small stone into an empty tin for every word Tariq can use. Then you seal up that tin. Everyone should help Tariq to learn new words, and then after a few months you play the game again, and see how the number of stones grows bigger each time.

Of course, you need a lot of patience and kindness. But remember, God is merciful and patient with every one of us.

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No. 3 : PEOPLE WHO HAVE FITS

Interviewer : Today we are talking with Malik Abdul Mohammed about one of the health problems of his village : people who have fits. *[Cut into conversation with tea cup clinking etc]*

Malik : ....so there are about four or five adults and children, out of 6,000 people in our area, who have fits badly. Perhaps there are more who have small fits which are not noticed. In times past we used to think that these people had a djinn. Now I know that it is simply a physical condition which can be treated with drugs.

Int : Which of these explanations is believed in your village ?

Malik : Some believe one thing, some believe the other. The more educated people, those who have been to school or have gone away and lived for some time in the city, they understand the modern approach : having fits is a medical condition which can be treated. But still the ordinary people are afraid when they see a man fall down, out of control, jerking and twitching his limbs. I myself used to think that there must be a djinn to have such an effect.

Int : But you have changed your mind now ?

Malik : Yes, I now know that it is a matter for medical treatment. I will tell you what caused me to change my mind. My cousin has a daughter who used to have fits. Her fits were not the strongest sort. She used to sit down suddenly and her face became blank for half a minute. Sometimes she would soil her clothes with urine during the fit. At first, my cousin was ashamed to have such a child. But the girl was normal in every other way. So once when he visited the city he took his daughter with him and consulted a doctor. Some tests were done at the hospital, and then drugs were prescribed.

Int : What effect did the drugs have ?

Malik : When the girl started taking them the fits stopped. Before, she was getting one or two small fits every day. After taking the drugs she had only an occasional fit, perhaps once in two months. So after a few months my cousin said, "The girl is cured. Thanks be to God !"

Int : What happened then ?

Malik : My cousin thought that the problem was finished, so he stopped buying the drugs for the girl. After another month, her fits began coming again. He took the girl a second time to the doctor. More tests were done. The doctor said that the girl would be O.K. but only if they continued with the drug without stopping. He also said to bring the girl every six months for a check-up.

Int That was good advice. The drug must be taken regularly. The person with fits should check up with the doctor after some time. How is your cousin's girl these days ?

Malik : She's fine now. This treatment started four years ago, and I took careful note of what happened. The drugs are working and the problem is under control. So I thought about this whole matter and I came to know for sure that the fits are a medical problem which can be treated. Now my cousin has arranged for his daughter's marriage.

Int : What about the other people in the village, who have fits ?

Malik : I sent word to the heads of their families, that they should get those people treated by the health worker. Some have done so, but others have given some excuse or have delayed. I have called one of the men who used to have fits. You may ask him any question. He is waiting outside. *[Calls]* "Ijaz, present yourself."

Ijaz : Peace be with you !

Malik & Int : And upon you be peace !

Malik : Ijaz, we wish to know whether you are having any problem now with fits.

Ijaz : God be praised, the problem has ceased since I went to the health worker and began taking the drugs he prescribed. Before, it used to be very difficult for me to work. In my family we are builders, and it happened one time that I was repairing a roof. I suffered a fit and fell from the roof and hurt myself badly. On another occasion I was using an axe to cut wood, when I had a small fit which caused me to lose concentration. As a result I cut my foot with the axe. In those days my family did not want me to continue working, because they were afraid I would have a bad accident.

Int : They had good reason to fear ! So what was decided ?

Ijaz : At first we visited some holy men and hakims and tried the prayers and treatments, but with no success. I was not willing to continue these visits because I wanted to avoid too many people coming to know about my problem. Some of our neighbours used to make nasty remarks about me. On one occasion when I was younger, I had a fight with a man because he said I was mad. It is true that I used to become irritable before having a fit, but I was not mad. He had no right to make such a remark.

Malik : That was all a long time ago. People do not say anything about you now. You are a respected builder of this village.

Int : So when did you get medical treatment ?

Ijaz : After a lot of discussion with the family, my father and my uncle said that I must not work with them in building and carpentry until I had got myself treated. So then I knew that I must see the health worker. First of all the health worker gave me some drugs which stopped the fits, but those drugs made me sleepy. I went again to him and asked for some other drug. The health worker told me that I should take the same drug, but less often. He said to take two pills instead of three. When I tried this number, the fits were stopped, and I did not feel sleepy. So that was the best.

Int : That is important. Each person is different from every other person. So the health worker has to balance the number of drugs, to stop the fits without causing any other problem like sleepiness.

Malik : Ijaz, do you know of any other person who has fits ?

Ijaz : I know of a boy on the far side of the village who has very strong fits. He is also mentally retarded. The family are hiding him. Even the neighbours did not know that he was there. I came to know about him because the family called me to build an extra room in their house. They had tied up this unfortunate boy in the women's quarters, but he got himself loose and came into the men's quarters and was shouting nonsense. Then they had to tell me about him, although they were ashamed and wished to hide him. His head was bruised because he often fell down when he had a fit.

Int : What did you say to them ?

Ijaz : I told them that there was no reason to hide the boy. They should not feel ashamed of him. They must take him to the health worker for some drugs to control his fits. The boy actually fell down in a fit when I was there, but the family stood and did nothing. I showed them how to loosen any tight clothing he was wearing, and to roll him on his side and place some cloth so that he would not bang his head on the hard floor. They asked, "Are you a builder or are you a doctor ?" But I told them that these are simple and sensible actions which any person can do. So, by explaining it, I convinced them.

Int You did well, Ijaz. Every person should have this knowledge and take these actions. Then the problem of fits will become manageable and the ordinary people will no longer fear djinns or make nasty comments. It is true that some children who have fits are mentally retarded. But there are many people who have fits and who are perfectly normal in every other way. In either case, treatment is possible and should be started without delay. In the case of the child who damages his head when he falls, it is possible to make a little helmet out of sponge rubber and cloth or leather, to protect the head. But in other ways the child who has fits should be treated normally. It is not possible for one person to catch fits from another person. There is no reason to keep people out of the normal life of the community, simply because they have fits.

No. 4 : PHYSICALLY DISABLED CHILD (FOLLOWING POLIO)

Counsellor : Ask a physically disabled child what he wishes for when he is day-dreaming: he may say that he would like to be a champion sportsman of his village. If he cannot be a sportsman, he would at least like to be able to run like other children.

There was once a little girl whose leg was withered, and her family gave her all possible care and treatment by their own efforts. That girl grew up to become a champion runner. Her name was Wilma. She was a black girl, from a family of American Negroes. When she was small she fell ill with poliomyelitis. After the fever passed, one of her legs was not working. Her family were poor. They could not afford any special treatment.

They took Wilma to a doctor, who told them that they should give exercise and massage. They asked the doctor "Isn't there any medicine that will cure her ? We will try to find the money." He said to them, "There is no medicine, whether you are rich or poor. You as a family can be the best medicine for Wilma, if you want." So the family agreed together that they would do whatever they could to help the little girl.

They used to take turns in massaging Wilma's paralysed leg. They would put a little oil on their hands and then rub the leg firmly along its length, upwards, away from the foot, with both hands. Then they used to help the leg to stretch and bend, and move the foot from side to side and up and down. They did this very gently to start with, because at first it was a little painful. They also helped Wilma to exercise her other leg and hips, to strengthen both sides of the body equally.

When they started massaging the leg, a little swelling came up at the knee and at the ankle. So they stopped exercises and went to ask the doctor. He said, "That's okay, that's normal, carry on with the exercises. There is usually a little swelling to start with, and it will disappear after a few days if you carry on with gentle massage and exercises. But if it gets worse, then you must stop."

Wilma's family took the doctor's advice and carried on giving massage and exercises three or four times each day. After a few days the swelling went down. Slowly, Wilma began to get a little strength back in her leg. Everyone got quite excited when she was able to wiggle her foot without help. They said to her, "Wilma, we're going to buy you a skipping rope for your next birthday, and you have to get fit in time to use it. You're gonna skip up and down the street."

Wilma's birthday was six months away. Wilma asked herself, "Will I ever be able to skip and run like other kids ? If ever I can run, I will run all day and all night, faster than anyone has ever run before." She said to her sister, "Hey, you better start training yourself, because I'm gonna do a lot of running. Now, help me move my leg." Together they swung the leg up, down, bend at the knee, stretch out again, across and back, flexing and straightening the ankle. Slowly, week by week, strength came back into Wilma's leg and the muscles began to show up.

Wilma's birthday came and went, but Wilma could not skip. It was a long time before she could even walk. Wilma had to have a caliper to brace and strengthen her leg before she could walk. Her family were poor people and they could not afford an expensive caliper. They made a splint out of wood and bandages and tied it behind the knee, so that Wilma's knee did not buckle and bend when she tried walking. They also made a pair of wooden crutches with padding to go under her arms, to help her walk.

One of Wilma's uncles worked in a garage with welding equipment. He said, "I can make a better splint than you have there, by welding metal rods." So he took a light iron rod and welded two flat strips bent in a half circle, to support the leg above the knee and above the ankle. He padded the supports with a piece of rubber, and sewed leather around the rubber to make it comfortable. They strapped it to Wilma's leg and helped her to stand up. "Is it good ?" they asked her. "No", said Wilma. "It pinches my leg just here."

So they tried again, fixing the padding in a different way. "Is it comfortable ?" they asked. "Sure", said Wilma, "It's comfortable, but now it's so loose that it doesn't support my knee at all !" Wilma's uncle measured the leg again and took the caliper back to his garage. He cut one of the supporting strips and welded it higher up and at a different angle. Then he put the padding back on, and brought it to Wilma. Three more times they tried it, and either it didn't fit or it was too loose. Each time Wilma's uncle said, "Don't worry, we'll go on until we get it right." Finally he brought the caliper and Wilma put it on and said, "Okay, now it's right. Now watch me walk !"

With her sisters holding each hand, Wilma staggered across the room. It took a lot of effort. It took even more effort before she could walk down the street. Months passed of hobbling about with calipers and crutches before Wilma was able to walk without these aids. Because Wilma was growing bigger, her uncle had to come again and adjust the caliper to take account of her legs growing longer.

The family called on the doctor again and told him, "Wilma's walking, but she's not very strong. She gets tired very quickly." The doctor said, "You've all done a good job with Wilma. Only one thing is missing: you have to make sure she eats plenty of good food. See that she gets a lot of milk and eggs, vegetables and fruit, lentils and meat whenever you can afford it. That way she will gather strength."

Wilma's family took the doctor's advice. They all agreed together that even if it cost a little more it would be worth while to get plenty of good food for Wilma. "We should have thought of this from the start", said Wilma's mother. Wilma's father said, "I'll work some extra hours and earn enough to buy good food for Wilma. It will be worth it, to see my daughter walking tall and proud."

There's not enough time to tell all the stages of Wilma's recovery. It was a long time before she could run, but when she reached that point she was hardly still for a moment. "I've lost years of running", she said, "I have to make up for lost time." When Wilma went to school, she was soon selected for the school sports team. She was given the nickname "Mosquito", because she was always buzzing around, never still.

Wilma felt she had a debt to pay to her family, and the way she chose to do it was by running. "All my family, mother and father, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, gave me their time and care to massage my leg and help me when I couldn't walk. Now I'm going to show them that their effort was worth while. They'll be proud of me !"

Wilma trained to be an athlete, running in all her spare time. She became school champion at sprinting. Then area champion, state champion, and finally she was selected to represent her country at the Olympics. There she broke records by winning four gold medals. Wilma never forgot that it was thanks to the efforts of her family, poor people who could give no expensive treatment to her but who did whatever they could, willingly and lovingly.

(Second voice) : Wilma Rudolph won gold medals for two sprints, the relay and the long jump at the Olympics in Rome, 1960. There may never again be a world champion who starts off with a paralysed leg. But the fact is still true that children who have become paralysed after polio can be helped back to mobility if their family is willing to make the same efforts that Wilma's family made

No. 5 : THE BLIND CHILD

Interviewer : Today we are going to hear the story of a young man who was born blind and who grew up in a village. Abdul Ghani, tell us your story.

Abdul Ghani : I am Abdul Ghani son of Abdus Salam. I have been blind from birth, and I am now 28 years old. I am working as a bicycl repair mechanic in this town. I grew up in a village where nobody knew how to teach blind children. By the mercy of God my family decided that I should be given the chance to learn a trade.

Once when I was a child I overheard my grandmother say to my mother that I should be a beggar when I grew up. I did not know what a beggar was, because I had never seen one. That evening when the family members were all present I asked, "What is a beggar ?" I could tell from the silence that I had asked an awkward question. If you are blind, you listen closely to sounds. I knew that everyone in the house had stopped whatever they were doing. My father said, "Abdul Ghani, why do you ask what a beggar is ?" I told my father that someone had said I should be a beggar when I grew up. Then my father was angry. I have never seen a man's face when he is angry, but it sounds as though his face must be twisted and his muscles stiff.

My father said, "No son of Abdus Salam will be a beggar. If God has sent you into the world without eyes, then God will give you more skill in your hands and ears. We will find a trade by which you can earn your bread. Never again say the word 'beggar' in this house."

Three days later my father and my uncles left the village. They walked for one day over the hills to the main road, then half a day's travel by bus to the city. My mother told me this later on, when I was older. In the city my father visited many teachers and doctors to ask about any trade or skill that a blind boy could learn. For days he went here and there talking to people without finding what he wanted. Finally he met an old doctor who had travelled abroad. That man had seen an institution where blind children were educated and were trained to make baskets and to weave cloth and to repair cane chairs.

My father questioned the old doctor closely about how the blind children were trained. When he came back to the village, my father spoke to the whole family : "We have learnt that it is possible for a blind child to get training so that he has a trade. We did not find a teacher, but we understand the method that was described to us. We will all take part in teaching Abdul Ghani. He will get his training right here in this house and in this village." My uncles all agreed with this plan.

Int : Abdul Ghani, how old were you at this time ? And what had you done up till then ?

A.G. : I was quite young, only 6 or 7 years old. Up to that time I had done nothing. I could feel my way around the house, but my family did not allow me to go outside, for fear that I might hurt myself or break something. I had learnt to express myself and say if I wanted food or toilet, but my family did not often talk to me. Many of the things they said were impossible for me to understand, because I could not see what they were talking about.

Int : So how did you come to understand their words ?

A.G. : My father told me this later on. When he came back from the city he said to the family, "It is now clear what we should have done right from the start, when Abdul Ghani was a baby. We have lost a few years, but now I know what to do and we will start today. We must all talk to Abdul Ghani, plainly and clearly, telling him what is happening around the place. He must listen to, or feel with his hand, whatever we are talking about. He must walk in every part of the house and every part of the village. We shall tell him whatever is there, and he shall hear and touch and smell and taste. When mother is preparing bread, Abdul Ghani shall feel and taste the flour, the salt, the water. The name of each thing shall be told to him. He shall feel the dough and he shall help to knead it. As his mother works, she shall say whatever she is doing."

My father continued : "Abdul Ghani will come with us when we work in the fields. His brother will take care that he does not bump into things or fall into the ditch while he is walking. Also we will get him a stick with which he can feel the walls and the path. Whatever his stick strikes against, we will tell him what it is and he can feel it with his hand. When the path turns to the left or to the right, we will tell him. Together with him we will count how many steps there are from the house to the corner, from the corner to the bridge, across the bridge and to the field, and so on. If a dog barks or a bird sings, we will tell him the name of that animal and describe how it runs or flies."

"In this family there are 11 persons, and 10 of us have eyes. Whatever we see with so many eyes, the same will be told to Abdul Ghani. When we speak to him, we will first say his name so that he knows we are speaking to him and not to another person. When we say the prayers, we will show him what movements and positions we adopt, and he will say the prayers with us."

Int : Abdul Ghani, how did this work out ?

A.G. : I don't remember much about what happened to start with. It was like a flood of words hitting me. I became confused with being told too many things from every side. Several people started speaking at once. I was taken outside the house and there were many unfamiliar sounds and smells and voices. So I became afraid and tried to cover my ears and face with my hands, to protect myself. Then my uncle Usman understood what the problem was, and he spoke to my father. He told him that my training should go step by step and that they should not tell too many things at one time. One thing should be told until I understood it, then another thing could be told.

My uncle Usman is very kind to me. He wanted to know how the world seemed to me, so he tied a bandage over his own eyes for one whole day, and moved around the house. Then he could understand some of the problems I faced. It was he who found a long thin stick for me, which I can easily balance in my hand and which tells me where I am along the road.

Later on, when I got used to moving about, I used to play a game with my brothers. In the evening when we were at home, we would pretend to be walking from the far end of the village, and we would count the number of steps and describe from memory every sight, sound and smell at each stage on the way home. When I had practised this game, I could remember things that they did not notice, like the sound of hens clucking as we passed one old woman's house, the smell of spices at the grocer's shop, the feel of one loose plank as we walked over the bridge.

Int : So you came to understand everything that your family said ?

A.G. : Not everything ! My little sister used to play tricks on me, like this : she would give me a big orange and a small grapefruit and would ask me which was which. I could not tell by the size and feel of them, but my nose would tell me which was which. Then she asked, "Which one is yellow ?" That I could not tell her, because I cannot tell what is the colour of anything. My uncle Usman tried to explain colour like this : even if two people say exactly the same thing, their voices have a different sound, which is like having a different colour. In the same way, two objects may be exactly the same, and feel exactly the same, but the eye can see some difference in that one object is red and the other is black. But I have never seen this.

Int : I would like to know more about how you developed your skills and what advice you would give to a family having a blind child. Will you return next week and tell us more ?

A.G. : I shall be glad to do so.

No. 6 : BLIND YOUNG MAN

Interviewer : Last week we talked with Abdul Ghani son of Abdus Salam, who has been blind from birth. He is now working as a bicycle mechanic. When he was younger, his family decided to help all together in his education and training. Whatever they saw and whatever they were doing, they used to explain it to Abdul Ghani. He would also feel everything with his hands. So he came to understand the world. Abdul Ghani is here again today. Abdul Ghani, how did you come to be a bicycle mechanic ?

A.G. : I did not immediately become a bicycle mechanic. I used to help my brothers crop farming in the fields. My father marked out an area and placed rows of small stakes in the ground three metres apart. Pieces of cord were tied to each stake. By using my stick I learnt my way around this area. I knew where to make the ridges of earth for the crop seeds, and I could feel with my stick if weeds were growing. I started with a very small plot of land. I ploughed and shaped the ridges and furrows and planted seeds. Then my father put stakes and cords over a larger area. To tell the direction from where I stood, I asked for the cords to be tied at different levels on the stakes, some higher and some lower and some running diagonally. By tapping the cords with my stick I could understand where I was and I knew what work to do in each place.

Int : Did you meet with any problems ?

A.G. : Of course, I did not learn all this in one day ! It took a lot of hard work. Often I stumbled and fell down. Once I broke my wrist in falling. Then my grandmother said to the family, "Why are you forcing the boy to work in the fields ? Now he has injured himself. If it was the will of God for Abdul Ghani to be a farmer, he would have been born with eyes in his head." This caused a great argument in the family. Finally my uncle Usman said, "Nobody is forcing the boy to work. Neither does religion say that the blind person must not work. It is a matter of choice. What does the boy himself say ?" I told them that I wanted to work, and nobody in the world could stop me working.

Int : What did the other people in your village think ?

A.G. : In the early days I heard several different views. Sometimes people give their views when I am present, as if I were not there or as if I were a child. Then they are surprised when I speak for myself ! Some people used to laugh when they saw me tapping the cords to find my way around my piece of land. They did not think I could grow anything.

I asked the names of those people. My brothers told me the names, and they wanted to go and pick a quarrel with those people. But I said, "No, leave it to me." After I had learnt to farm my land, when harvest came I sent a gift of my crops to every person who had not believed that I could grow anything.

Int : *[laughing]* Well done ! And what did they do ?

A.G. : They gave a feast in my honour. They announced to the elders of the village that Abdul Ghani son of Abdus Salam has become a farmer who produces crops and gives out gifts. But I said to them, "Let us give praise only to God. By the will of God I was born without sight. My father and mother and uncles and brothers have all helped, and by the mercy of God I am now able to work."

Once, some boys altered the cords on the stakes, to confuse me. If you are blind, you learn to tell your direction by several ways. I feel the sun on my face, I hear the crows cawing in a clump of trees, I feel the direction of the wind. Thus I knew that somebody had altered the cords. My brothers caught those boys and wished to beat them. But I said, "What benefit is it to me if they are beaten ? Have they been to school and can they read ?" Two of them could read. "Very well", I said, "You will come every day in the evening and read to me from your schoolbooks. I will learn more about the world, about my country and my people." So I had no more trouble from the boys, because I had saved them from a beating. And they read to me everything that was in their books.

Int : Is that how you now come to be working here in the town ?

A.G. : My uncle Usman saw that I wished to learn more, so again the family had a long debate about what I should do. My father and uncles again made a journey to the city and I went with them, to ask about work for blind people.

Int : What was wrong with farming ? You learnt how to do that work and to grow crops.

A.G. : Still to this day I have a small garden in my uncle's house in this town, in which I grow vegetables. But my father said, "The world is changing. Up to now we have lived as our grandfathers and great grandfathers. But for our grandsons, life will be different. Many will go to the towns and cities. They will see and do things that were never seen before. Therefore it is right for Abdul Ghani to learn a modern trade. After twenty years have passed, all our neighbours will be ploughing with tractors, but it will be hard for a blind man to use a tractor. Let us find a modern trade, so that he will become independent all his life.

Many things were suggested. I believe now that I could have learnt any of those things. In the Western countries, blind people operate computers and the most advanced equipment. But I am a humble person and I have no such ambition. In one of the books read to me by the schoolboys there was a chapter about bicycles. The bicycle is the transport of the ordinary man. So I said to my family, "Let me learn to be a bicycle mechanic. This work can be done sitting in one place. The tools are not expensive. I will learn the shape of every part, and how each part is fixed."

So I sat together with my uncle Usman, taking an old bicycle to pieces and putting it together again. It was more difficult than I expected. I had felt bicycles with my hands, but I did not know that there were pieces hidden inside. There are ball bearings inside the moving parts. There are tubes inside the tyres. It took me several months to learn how to do this work. For example, when the pedal of a bicycle is jammed and will not turn, I unscrew the pedal. I have many small wooden trays arranged on the floor by my side. In one of them I have pliers. In another box I have spanners. In another I have screwdrivers. When I take the pedal to pieces, I lay out the pieces in order, counting them as I do so. By this means, when I have cleaned and adjusted and oiled the pedal, I put it together again, counting every piece so that I do not miss out any ball bearings, nuts or washers.

People who have brought their bicycles to me for repair have found that my work is good. They have told their families. By this means I have become well known in this town. Now I have gone into partnership with another young man, whose legs are paralysed. He sits on a trolley and works with his hands. We have plenty of repair work to do.

Int : Abdul Ghani, whenever my bicycle needs repair, I will certainly bring it to you !

No. 7 : THE DEAF CHILD - DIAGNOSIS & GENERAL

Counsellor : In the past few weeks we have talked about children and young people with different disabilities. First of all we looked at the fingers on our hand, and saw that one of them is smaller and weaker than all the others. But we do not disregard it simply because it is small and weak. In the same way, one child out of every ten on average has some disability, and needs extra care and help from its family and the local community. We heard from the parents of one such child who is mentally retarded. They were given advice on how to help their child at home. Those parents will be coming back in a week or two, to report how they have got along with the training of their child.

We heard from a village Malik about the problem of fits in his village, and what has been done about it. Then the story was told of a remarkable little girl who was paralysed as a result of polio. Her family worked together to give her treatment at home, and that little girl overcame her disability to become a champion athlete. For the past two weeks we have been hearing about blind children and how to help them overcome their disabilities.

This week we look at ways to help the child who cannot hear properly. Most of the advice about other disabilities applies also to the problem of deafness. Whatever the disability, the child needs a lot of love and encouragement in order not to feel unhappy and lonely. The child needs to join in the normal, everyday activities as far as possible, and to be treated as normally as possible. This is certainly true of the deaf child. The deaf child learns a lot through seeing, since the ears are not working properly. The more the deaf child sees of normal, everyday behaviour, the more he or she will understand and copy it. So it is best for such children to be fully involved in every part of ordinary life.

Let's talk with the father of one deaf child. Jehanzeb Khan, when did you discover that your daughter had a hearing problem ?

Jehanzeb Khan : Bilkees was quite small, about four years old, when we took her to the doctor. For several months my mother had thought there was something wrong, but my wife did not find any problem. Bilkees was our first child, and we did not have much experience to compare her with. When she was a baby she made the sort of squeals and babbling noise that babies usually make, so we did not imagine anything was wrong. Later she became very quiet, and did not start to talk at the time you would expect. My wife began then to wonder if Bilkees was mentally weak. But she always looked very alert. From very early on, Bilkees would follow with her eyes whatever was happening, so I did not think she could be mentally weak.

My wife said, "When Bilkees is ready to talk, she will talk." But my mother got worried, and urged us to see the doctor. Finally, Bilkees got a very bad cold which never seemed to clear up. There was a little pus coming from one ear, and Bilkees kept rubbing it. So we went to the doctor and explained the problem. She did a few tests. The tests were so simple, we could have done them ourselves if we had thought of it. The doctor told us what to do : Bilkees sat on my wife's lap, while I stood in front showing her a toy. I was closely watching her eyes while she looked at the toy. The doctor stood to one side behind Bilkees and her mother, and rang a little bell. I was watching Bilkees, and her eyes did not move from the toy, even though the bell sounded behind her. It was as simple as that. From that moment I knew she was deaf.

The doctor tried a few other sounds, like rattling small stones in a plastic cup, and crushing up a newspaper, behind Bilkees' right ear and then her left ear. One time Bilkees did look round, but that was my fault. I looked away from her to where the doctor was standing :- that gave Bilkees the clue that something was happening behind her, so she looked round . But she had heard nothing.

Cllr : You have given a very clear description ! I must congratulate you on making such close observation of your daughter. In fact, that is one of the most important things that all families with a handicapped child should do : to watch closely and see what the child actually can do or cannot do. What was the next step you took ?

J.K. : The doctor said that there were several things that might be wrong, and we should treat them one by one. First she gave some medicine for Bilkees to clear up her cold and the pus in her ear. This medicine was effective after a few days. The doctor told us to come back when the cold had gone. When we saw her again, she cleaned out both the child's ears very gently, using warm water in a little rubber pump. Then she went through the same hearing tests again. Bilkees sat on her mother's lap while I stood in front keeping her attention with a toy and watching her eyes. This time there was a different reaction from Bilkees. She could hear some of the sounds at one ear, but nothing with the other ear. So we asked the doctor what did all of this mean

She told us that there are two different sorts of deafness, and she explained it in a very complicated way and we could not understand a word of it. I asked her straight out :- Is Bilkees deaf, or is she not deaf ? So then she said that one ear is completely deaf, and always has been deaf. The other ear is partly working, but it stopped working due to the cold and infection and blockage with wax. Once we had cleared up the infection with medicine and removed the wax with warm water, that ear had begun working again, but only partly working.

Cllr : This is true of most deaf children. Even if much of their hearing ability is lost, usually some part remains. Even that part can be lost temporarily due to an infection or dirt or wax in the ear. Whatever hearing remains, it is important to make use of it as far as possible. If one ear is working, make sure that you talk into that ear. Make sure that the ears are kept clean, and that any colds or infections are treated quickly.

It was fortunate that Bilkees' mother and grandmother did take action when they thought there might be some problem. The sooner it is found, the better. All parents ought to check their children's hearing if they have the smallest doubt that there is any problem. Families often think their child's hearing is okay simply because the child reacts to a loud noise. But that same child may be unable to hear quiet sounds or high pitched sounds, with the result that he or she misses a lot of ordinary spoken language, whether at home or at school.

Mr. Jehanzeb, you were very observant when the doctor was testing Bilkees. You noticed something which often misleads families. It looked as though Bilkees had heard the sound made by the doctor behind her back, but you noticed that she looked round only because she saw you looking at the doctor. Deaf children are often very sharp eyed. They have to rely on their eyes to tell them what is going on.

J.K. : Yes, we noticed that, since Bilkees was a baby. The other thing the doctor advised us was to **talk** a great deal to Bilkees, and to use signs with our hands at the same time.

Cllr : Yes, that is important. We now know that deaf or partly hearing children need to learn to communicate in every way possible. This is a big topic, which needs plenty of time for discussion. Let's cover it more fully in next week's talk.

No. 8 : DEAF CHILD (SPEECH DEVELOPMENT)

Counsellor : Last week we talked with Mr. Jehanzeb Khan about his daughter Bilkees who is deaf. Mr. Jehanzeb is here again today. He says that he has been advised to talk a lot to Bilkees. This is good advice to all parents with handicapped children, whatever their disability.

Jehanzeb Khan : Respected Counsellor, it is not easy to talk to a child when you know she is deaf ! If Bilkees is not looking towards me, she does not know I am speaking to her. I have to attract her attention by tapping her arm. Even when she can see that I am speaking, she does not seem to respond or to understand. Sometimes I ask myself whether it is worth speaking.

Cllr : It is not easy. Think of yourself in the situation of Bilkees. There are times when you cannot hear properly, such as when you are seated at the back of a meeting and someone is speaking quietly at the front.

J.K. : In that situation I would move nearer, or request the man to speak more loudly. Also I would cup a hand behind my ear.

Cllr : Yes, these are good ways to hear more easily. In the case of Bilkees, you first attract her attention. Then it is helpful if you are near to her and speak in a clear voice. It is best not to shout. Speak clearly, a little louder than usual, at the normal speed. Always let Bilkees see your face, with the light towards you. If you are sitting in the shade, or the light is behind your head, she will see very little even though you may be facing her.

J.K. : But what will she see anyway ? It's not possible to see words coming from the mouth !

Cllr : Bilkees sees more than you think ! Let us take another example. Suppose I speak to you from a distance in a foreign language. You faintly hear some words, but you don't know their meaning. That is the situation in which Bilkees normally finds herself. If I say to you in the foreign language, "Jehanzeb, take the book from the table and give it to that man", you would understand nothing. But suppose that while I say the words, my hands and my eyes point to the book and the man. I say "Jehanzeb" (looking straight at you) "take the book" (showing with my hands the shape of an open book) "from the table" (my eyes gaze at the book on the table) "and give it" (my hand makes the motion of giving) "to that man" (I point towards the man). In that case your eyes would tell you more than your ears.

J.K. : That is true; I understand the picture you have given. But I have one question : if Bilkees sees all the signs and movements and can learn to understand them, why should we speak at all ? We will talk to her by making signs with our hands.

Cllr : That is what has been done by many thousands of families with a deaf child, and they have had some success with it. But it is not a complete answer. On the other hand, there are some deaf people who have learned to speak so well that they are easily understood, without using any signs at all. But there are few who succeed so well. So, between these two methods, it is best to use signs with the hands at the same time as spoken words, to help deaf children learn to understand and to speak.

J.K. : Respected Counsellor, we will do whatever is best. But is it true that deaf people can learn to speak ? We always call them "deaf and dumb". Perhaps some surgical operation needs to be carried out. Before we learnt that Bilkees is deaf, our only concern was that she did not speak. We were told that we should cut the flesh under her tongue and so enable her to speak.

Cllr : No such thing is required, and it is a harmful and dangerous practice to do any such operation. Bilkees has a perfectly good tongue, lips and throat with which to speak. It was fortunate that you did not permit any cutting, otherwise serious damage could have been caused.

J.K. But if that is the case, why does she not speak ? How will she learn ?

Cllr : It is like this. All babies make cries and babbling sounds when they are very small. If their ears work properly, they can hear their own cries and this encourages them to make more sounds. Also their mother talks to them and the baby tries to say the same words as the mother. But when the ears do not work, the baby cannot hear its own babbling, nor its mother's voice. So after some time it stops babbling.

J.K. : That happened with Bilkees. She made cries when she was very small, but later on she became silent.

Cllr : There you see that nothing is wrong with her tongue and voice. To encourage her to use them, you and your wife may proceed as follows: sit Bilkees right in front of you and make her look into your face. Say some short, simple words and let her see how your lips move. Let her put her hand to your throat and feel the vibration made by your voice. Let her try to make the same movements and produce some sounds. Praise her as soon as she makes an effort. Also let her see her own face in a mirror when she is making sounds.

In order to join the sound of the word with the meaning of the word you may use signs or may show actions. For example, you can point to a bed, a mat, an arm, a leg, as you say the name of each thing. Tell another child to come, to go, to pick up, to sit, in order that Bilkees may understand the meaning of each word. You need to think carefully in order not to confuse her. If you are waving your hand about, she cannot concentrate on your face. Decide on one sign with your hands to indicate one thing or action. Everyone in the family should use the same sign.

J.K. : It sounds a difficult program : we have to speak to her and also make signs, and also help her to imitate what we are doing so that she learns to speak and understand. How long will this take ?

Cllr : Certainly it is not easy. You will have hard work for several years. But if you do not make the effort, you will have a daughter who can never understand you nor speak to you. Set yourself simple targets each month. Take 20 words that are most important for the child to learn. For example : her name, the names of all the family, words like "come", "go", "eat", "sleep", "good", "bad", "toilet", "dress". Teach her some of these words in one month. Next month, try some more words. Go on step by step, always giving her praise for every effort she makes. Remember this : she is not stupid, and she is not dumb. She is deaf, but not completely deaf.

J.K. : And she is the child whom God has given us ! Only one last question, please. Should we try to get a hearing aid ? It is said that they are very expensive, but if it will cure my child I will find the money somehow.

Cllr : A hearing aid will not cure deafness, but it might bring some benefit. Before buying a hearing aid, Bilkees needs to have her hearing tested on a machine called an audiometer. Bilkees will need specially shaped ear-pieces to fit into her ears, and they will need to be changed every three to six months as she grows bigger. If these cannot be obtained, the hearing aid will be no use. Find out also what sort of batteries the hearing aid uses, and whether there is a supply available in your village. Do not buy a hearing aid from a shopkeeper unless he has been trained to supply the correct type of aid and to adjust and repair the aid if it stops working.

And at the end, if all these things are available, it is still true that you need to make every effort to help Bilkees by talking to her, treating her as normally as possible and giving her as much love as you would give any of your children.

No. 9 : PROGRAM FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILD

Counsellor : Two months ago we met the parents of young Tariq, a boy who is mentally retarded. This week they are here again to discuss their progress.

Father : Respected Counsellor, thank you for the advice you gave us about Tariq. After two months we have begun to see a difference in his behaviour. Life is easier at home now. It was just like you said. Beforehand, everyone in the family was making up different rules for Tariq and then changing them. He could not understand what was wanted. So we took your advice. We all agreed together on a plan to help the boy. We decided that whatever he could do for himself, he must be encouraged to do it.

Cllr : Very good ! How did that work in practice ?

Father : At first it was difficult. Tariq was used to being treated like a baby, so he did not expect to do anything. When we told him that he must try dressing himself, he began screaming. Because of the noise, my wife wanted to dress him herself. She said, "The people of the village will say that we are torturing the boy." But I said, "Let's try it only for one week. Nobody is hurting him. Perhaps he will get tired of screaming and will do what we want him to do." So we ignored his screaming and just carried on normally. On the second day he stopped the noise and tried to get himself dressed. Then we praised him. He managed to put his trousers on but could not fasten his belt. He got his shirt on all right, but could not do up the buttons. So we helped him with those things which he couldn't do. When he had got all his clothes fixed, we told him that he was a clever boy now who could dress himself.

Cllr : Very good ! Your approach is correct. Mentally retarded children often find ways to embarrass their parents, such as screaming or throwing their food on the floor. It is important not to let them succeed in this game. Suppose Tariq screams and as a result you do something he wants, in order to keep him quiet. What does he learn from that ? He learns that screaming is a good method to get his own way. Next time he wants something, he screams again. But if you ignore this game, and pay no attention to it, then he will learn that he is wasting his time by screaming.

You were right to praise him as soon as he did what you wanted. You see, there has to be a balance. Whatever you do, the child must know that there is some way he can please you and earn your praise. If you ignore his bad behaviour but you give him nothing else to do, then the child will feel rejected and unloved. Then he has real cause for weeping. So you need to find plenty of things for him to do, so that he can succeed and earn praise

Mother : This has been part of the problem. We don't know what sort of thing to tell him to do next. Of course, a lot of the time he is just playing with the other children of the village, but he plays with children much younger than himself. I sometimes ask myself whether he will ever grow up.

Cllr : He will certainly grow up, if he is encouraged to join in all the normal activities of life. Let him play with the other children. He will learn new words from them and he will discover how to act cooperatively with other people. But his ability to understand things will be less than theirs.

Mother : But **what** things **should** he try to understand ? You know, Respected Counsellor, with normal children they seem to learn everything as they get bigger. Usually by the time a boy reaches Tariq's age, he can tell whatever he has been doing during the day. He is able to run to the shopkeeper to buy bread. After a few more years he knows something about farming, he can help in the fields, he can learn old stories from his grandfather and can repeat them. All these things a boy picks up naturally. But what happens if a boy does not learn them ? Who can tell what he should learn or how he will learn it ?

Cllr : These are good questions. The answers depend on your own situation at home and on the child's ability. You must sit together as a family and **decide** what action you want Tariq to learn next. Then you must think of every small part of that action, and see whether Tariq is ready and able to do each part, or whether you need to wait for him to grow and develop some more.

Let me explain. Suppose you want Tariq to go and collect bread from the baker. To do that, he needs to know where the baker is and how to find his way home again. He must know that if other people have come to buy bread before him then he must wait his turn. He must take with him the cloth to wrap the bread, and the money to pay. Tell me, is a child born with all this knowledge in his head ?

Father : Of course not ! When he is big enough he goes each day with his brother or his father, and so he learns. So you mean that Tariq should learn everything little by little in this way ?

Cllr : Correct ! But also I am saying that every action is made up of smaller actions, each of which needs to be learnt. It is useless to try to make a child do something that is too complicated for him. It is only by closely watching what he can **actually do** that you can find out what is the next task to set before him, and whether he will be able to learn it. It is useless to try to force the boy to do something which is too difficult and contains actions for which he is not yet ready.

Let's take an example : Tariq can put on his shirt, but he cannot do up the buttons. To put on his shirt, he has already succeeded in many smaller actions. He can tell one side of the shirt from the other. He can find the arm holes and push his arms into them. He pulls the shirt over his head and down over his chest. So he deserves your praise. Now to do up the buttons he needs a different set of movements. The button is small and needs to be grasped with the fingers. The buttonhole is also small. And you must realise that once Tariq has put on his shirt, he cannot easily see the buttons because they are beneath his chin.

Mother : Suppose first of all he were to practise doing up and undoing buttons on a shirt that he is <u>not</u> wearing?

Cllr : You're thinking is correct ! Sew some big buttons and make big buttonholes in two pieces of cloth. Let the boy begin learning with big buttons which he can easily grip with his fingers. Let him start by <u>undoing</u> buttons, because that is easier than doing them up.

Father : I see ! We will make a program for him. On the first day he will learn to undo big buttons. On the second day he will learn to do them up. Next day he will try smaller buttons. After a week he will succeed in buttoning his own shirt even while he is wearing it !

Cllr : That's right. But don't be surprised if your program takes a month instead of a week ! One step might take a day, then the next step might take ten days. Another point to remember is that the child may not be able to give his attention for more than a few minutes. Let him practise an activity for 15 minutes in the morning, and again in the evening. He will learn more by this method than if you force him to sit down for a whole hour once per day.

To help the mentally retarded child learn, you need to look at everything from several different points of view. For example, until the child learns to do up his trouser belt, you could sew an elastic band into the trousers so that he can put them on by himself without trouble. So he becomes independent more quickly, for dressing himself and for toilet. You could also sew a zip fastener into his shirt instead of buttons. There are a thousand simple steps like this, which provide a way out of a thousand difficulties. Each one requires patience and thought to find.

No. 10 : CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

Counsellor : When people talk about disabled children, they may think of the physically disabled child who cannot walk or who drags himself along the ground. This week we discuss some ways to help children with a special type of physical disability : cerebral palsy. Three parents are here, Mr. Imtiaz, Mr. Subhanullah and Mrs. Bashir, with some questions to ask about how they should handle their children.

Mr. Imtiaz : Doctor Sahib, we heard your broadcast about a crippled girl who became a champion runner. We have tried massaging our child's legs, but there is little progress. Should we continue ?

Mrs. Bashir : And another question please, Doctor Sahib. My child is different. Her arms and legs flap about without control. I can't see how she will ever be able to walk or run properly.

Cllr : These are good questions, and you are right to ask them. The story about the girl who became a champion runner was told to encourage families whose child is paralysed after poliomyelitis. Of course, only one in a million of such children can become an athlete, but the important point was that most children can show some improvement if the family members all help. The sooner the treatment begins, the better the progress.

Some children are disabled from other causes, such as cerebral palsy. In cerebral palsy, the body and limbs do not get the right message from the brain. These children may have weak muscles which don't work together to hold the child up. Or they may be too stiff, with the muscles all pulling at the same time. Or they may be out of control, so that the limbs shake. The same disabilities happen in wealthy countries as well as poor countries. There is no cure from medicine or surgery. It is pointless to waste time and money going here and there looking for a cure. The same time and money should be spent at home, helping the child to overcome the disability.

Mr. Imtiaz : Doctor Sahib, from what you say, perhaps my son is not paralysed, but his muscles are weak and disorganised. He has been like that from birth.

Cllr : Yes. Paralysis after polio usually occurs like this : the child has a bad cold or fever, with perhaps a stomach upset and aching muscles. Afterwards, one or more limbs stop working. Paralysis is more likely to follow if the child has been given an injection. Injections should not be given if the child seems to have a cold or flu. But in the case of your son, if he has been weak and floppy since birth, then he probably has cerebral palsy.

Mr. Imtiaz : So what should we do ? Was it wrong to give massage ?

Cllr : No, you have done no harm and it is good for him to have the active attention of his family. Massage helps prevent his muscles from tightening up in the wrong way. If the child's muscles are weak, he needs movement and exercise to build up strength. But there are many muscles in the body. If they don't get the right message from the brain then it is a difficult business to make the whole body work.

Take this example : when an experienced cultivator takes a young labourer to work in the fields for the first time, the young man spends much energy in the work and exhausts himself and his muscles ache and he has blisters on his hands. Yet despite all this, he finds that the experienced man has done more work without even sweating !

Parents : *[laughing]* Very true ! It happens each year !

Cllr : The experienced man has all his muscles well organised. His legs and arms and shoulders and head are all in the correct position, neither doing too much nor too little. Now a normal child learns to sit up, to stand, to walk, to talk and to perform every action, by organising his limbs and using all his muscles and balancing his body and his head. He practises these things hundreds and thousands of times, without even thinking about it. But in the case of the child with cerebral palsy, he finds difficulty using his limbs and muscles correctly because his brain is not giving the right message. So he is like the young labourer who makes a lot of effort but achieves little. When the child achieves little, he is not motivated to practise. If he does not practise, he does not learn to do better.

Mrs. Bashir : But in time the young labourer learns how to do the work, by watching the older man and by practising. In the same way, the young women learn to balance water jars on their heads when they go to the well with the older women.

Cllr : Certainly they learn. But they would not learn if they sat at the side of the field and merely watched. They need to try out all the movements and actions. In the same way, the child with cerebral palsy needs to try out every sort of movement hundreds of times, with praise and encouragement as she tries.

Mr. Imtiaz : The trouble is, my son is so weak that he does not sit up properly. Since he does not even sit up, it is difficult for him to try anything else, like feeding himself or pulling on his clothes.

Cllr : That is exactly the point I am making. If he does not sit up by himself, you must help him to sit by propping him up in a corner or by cutting a strong cardboard box so that he sits in it with support on each side. When he is supported in the sitting position, give him things to do with his arms and hands so that he has a chance to practise these movements while sitting up.

Take another example : suppose a young child cannot move her head properly. In that case, she cannot see what is happening on either side of her. Lying on her back, she can see only the sky and so she learns nothing at all. So help her roll onto her stomach, with her arms and shoulders on her mother's knees as mother sits on the ground. There the child has a strong reason to hold up her head and to look around. When she makes this effort, her mother can give praise and encouragement. The whole family should talk to the child, encourage her, help her to speak and find things for her to do. Let her play with ordinary household objects. Let her join as far as possible in the games the other children are playing.

Mr. Subhanullah : Excuse me, I have listened carefully to your excellent advice, but I have one problem. My child is five years old and he is not floppy and weak, nor do his limbs shake. His problem is stiffness. His limbs seem to resist any movement. Also, his legs are crossed over. He can creep along the floor with some difficulty.

Cllr : Mr. Subhanullah, this is a common sort of cerebral palsy, and the advice applies to your child also. You need to encourage the normal positions and movements, and help to overcome the unusual ones like crossing over of his legs. For example : help the boy to sit on the floor with a cooking pot between his thighs. In this way he will practise keeping his legs apart. When you carry him, let him sit on your hip with his legs on each side. With children whose muscles are stiff and too tight, massage with movement will help to reduce the tightness. Handle the limbs gently and slowly. Avoid sudden movements which will cause the muscles to stiffen up in reaction.

Mrs. Bashir : Doctor Sahib, if the brain is not sending the right messages to the body, does it mean that these children have weak intelligence ?

Cllr : In some cases it is so, but in other cases the intelligence is normal. It is good to talk to your child exactly as you would to a normal child, even if there is little response. Some children can understand what is said, even though they cannot control their mouth properly in order to reply.

The fact is that every child is different. Families need to use their eyes and their brains and look closely at their own child to see exactly what she can do and what she cannot do. Then they need to think carefully about the movements of the body and the limbs, and help the child to practise the normal movements repeatedly, taking up different positions; rolling, sitting, crawling, squatting, standing and so on. This is not easy work. It is hard work, and the whole family should join together and help and give encouragement. Then the child will begin to make progress.

No. 11 : SPEECH PROBLEMS & BEHAVIOUR DIFFICULTIES

Interviewer : Several weeks ago we visited the village of Malik Abdul Mohammad, and talked with him about people who have fits. We are in the village again this week, and will discuss the problems of children who stammer and children who act in a strange way.

Malik : There are several children in this village who stammer or who cannot pronounce their words correctly. In most villages there are some children who have this problem. Also there are some children who wet the bed with urine in the night, even though they are not babies. We also know of a few children who do not behave in the normal way. I don't mean the mentally retarded child, who learns slowly. I mean the sort of child who knows what he should do yet does not do it, despite being punished. Also the sort of child who withdraws from normal life and just sits in the corner looking at nobody.

Int : Malik Sahib, are there many such children in your village ?

Malik : There are seldom more than two or three children with such behaviour. There are many more who soil the bed or who stammer.

Int : What is the reaction of the families to such children ?

Malik : In some cases the parents beat the child for soiling the bed, but I have never seen any sense in this practice. The child does not wish to wet the bed, so it is senseless to punish him. But I cannot propose any other solution. In most cases it seems to pass off as they get older. But of course, it makes a lot of work for the women to wash the clothes and so on.

Int : To punish the child is certainly useless. In fact, it tends only to make the child more fearful and upset, which makes it more likely to wet the bed. It is sensible to send the child to pass urine before he lies down to sleep. With some children who wet the bed, it helps if the parents limit the amount the child drinks in the evening. This should be done with caution, and it is not of use with all children. Don't do it in the heat of summer, nor with a child who has diarrhoea, because they need plenty of liquid.

Malik : The child wets the bed because it is upset and nervous ?

Int : When the child has been upset and nervous during the day, or especially excited, he cannot easily relax. Then when he finally goes to sleep he may relax so far that he releases his urine without waking. But the exact connection between the mind, the nervous system and the release of urine during sleep is not known even to modern medical science. For the same reason, we do not recommend the use of any drugs, since they may cause damage to the child's development.

What we do know is that children need to relax and get rid of the tensions of the day. One of the best ways for them to relax is if their parents and the rest of the family give attention to the children in the evening, talking to them, playing games, telling stories, singing songs to them.

If the child does wet the bed, the parents should not make a fuss over it. They should not punish or scold, nor should they give extra attention just them. If they give extra attention to the child after he has wet the bed, the child learns that he can get his parents' attention by this means. It is far better that they give him time and attention in the evening, before he goes to bed. In fact, the same principle applies with children who stammer.

Malik : The same principle ? But it seems to be an entirely different case. How do you connect the child who wets the bed with the child who stammers ?

Int : The method of managing it is the same. The family should not make any fuss at all when the child stammers, but instead they should give her plenty of attention and help her feel secure and loved all the time. Every child stammers as a baby. The baby chatters and babbles, and slowly it learns to form a word and then to place words together in order. But if people catch hold of every mistake and begin scolding the child and making it afraid, of course it will make more and more mistakes. Abdul Mohammad, you are a big malik of this region. You know that when you call an adult man to explain his conduct, if he is a man of small family he loses confidence and begins to stammer and cannot say what he wants.

Malik : That is true. The only way to get sensible speech from such a person is to talk to him quietly about ordinary things which he knows well, such as the crops in the field and the price of potatoes in the bazar. Then he relaxes and does not stammer.

Int : There are many reasons why a child may become nervous and upset. Sometimes it happens that the father has gone away to the city for a long time for employment, and the child thinks to himself "My father went away because I was a bad child. He did not love me because I am no good. If I were good, he would not have left the village and gone away."

Malik : Surely the child has no reason to think like this !

Int : He has no reason at all, yet such thoughts are common among children. Another child may be upset when a new baby is born. He finds that he is no longer the centre of his mother's attention. Then the child may begin some sort of strange behaviour to win the attention of his parents. He might begin hitting other children, or refusing to eat his food.

The older child may be worried by the development of his body as he grows up. In the case of a boy, the men of the family should tell him how the body develops when a boy becomes capable of the sex act. The older women should explain to a girl about her monthly discharges and so on. Children with disabilities should be told about these things just as much as any other child.

Sometimes a child is upset because an adult has taken him into the fields and acted indecently with him. The adult may threaten harm if the child tells anything. Then the child is caught between two fears. He wants to tell what happened, but he is afraid that he will be punished and harmed. So he may become very silent and withdrawn. In another case, a child may be left-handed, but when she tries to use her left hand she is prevented by the family. They might tie the left hand or beat her or abuse her. This results in great emotional disturbance to the child.

Malik : The people believe that it is against religion to use the left hand. But I myself have known some good people who were left handed. What is the answer to this ?

Int : Religion teaches that the left hand is used for cleaning the private parts, but it is not forbidden to use the left hand for other purposes. Out of every hundred children, four or five are naturally left handed. God has given them more ability in their left hand. It is a mistake to try to stop it. Such children should be taught to clean their hands with water and soap after toilet. If they go to school, the teacher should permit the child to write with the left hand. Otherwise, if she is punished or the hand is tied, she may become confused and nervous, joining those who stammer or who wet the bed or show other difficult behaviour.

Malik : What is to be done for these children with so many causes for fears and nervous behaviour ? Our families in this village are ordinary people who herd animals and labour in the fields or who own shops and trade in goods. We are not experts on the problems of nervous children !

Int : There is no need for experts. The best treatment for the child is to be in the midst of his family, so long as that family holds together with love and affection and practises good deeds that are taught by religion. If the child knows that he is safe and secure among his family members, he will find a way out of his difficulties. But if the family is at war among its members, or its energies are occupied in pursuing a feud, then the prospects for the child are not good.

No. 12 : CAUSE & PREVENTION OF DISABILITIES

Counsellor : For several weeks we have been talking about ways in which disabled children and adults can live their lives successfully in spite of being disabled. But there is no doubt that the disabled person has a difficult life, even if he succeeds in overcoming his disability. Doctors engaged in medical research tell us that half of all disabilities could have been prevented from ever happening. Cause and prevention of disability is therefore an important subject, which we will discuss this week. Once again, we are paying a visit to the village of Malik Abdul Mohammad.

Malik : Welcome again ! Many people in the village have been listening to the broadcasts and there has been a lot of discussion. We now know that there are many more families with handicapped children than we knew about previously. We discovered it in the following way. One of my nephews is a clever young man who has been studying in the city. He visited the village and was sitting in the community hall talking with the men. So he challenged us all. "What are you doing about the disabled people ?", he asked. "Do you know how many handicapped children there are in the village", he asked. "What are the causes of the disabilities ? What are you doing to prevent disabilities from happening ?", and so on.

Cllr : Young men ask awkward questions !

Malik : I have no objection to questions, if they are sensible. In this case my nephew sparked off a long discussion and all who were present resolved to find out the answers to these questions. My nephew and some fellow students took permission from us to conduct a survey in this area. They took details from the head of each family about any disabled children. They also asked people what they thought caused the disabilities.

Cllr : That is a very useful activity. The first step towards preventing disabilities is to find out how much disability exists and what the people think about it. So what answers were given ?

Malik : Up to now the young men have surveyed half the village, that is about 250 households, and they have discovered 30 children suffering from disabilities. But they tell me that there are still more than that number. In some cases they understood that the head of the family was unwilling to give details. Also there were no children reported of less than 5 years of age, although there must be some disabled infants of that age group.

Cllr : Often when the child is very young the parents don't notice any disability, or they hope that it will just go away. What was the commonest sort of disability ?

Malik : Nearly half of these children are physically disabled, with one or more paralysed limb. Then there are four or five with speech defects and the same number who are mentally retarded. Two are deaf and two are blind. Of the mentally retarded, two also have fits, and there are another two children who act strangely.

Cllr : There must have been an outbreak of poliomyelitis to cause so many children to have paralysed limbs. What reasons did the people give for the disabilities ?

Malik : People gave many reasons. I have discussed this with the students. It appears that the replies fall into two groups. In the first group, medical reasons are given. People said, "The child is disabled because there was something wrong in the mother's body". Or they said, "It runs in that family. They have several children with the same problem." Or they said, "There was some problem during the birth of the baby." Some people mentioned accidents with farm animals. Others said the disability arises after a fever.

In the second group of answers, people gave religious reasons, or no reasons at all. They said, "It's fate. It's the will of God". Or they said the parents must have done some evil things. Or perhaps the child had come under the influence of an eclipse of the moon, or the shadow of a dead body had crossed the child.

Cllr : What did you think of these replies ?

Malik : I said to the young men that if a matter of religion was involved, we should hear the views of the religious teacher. So we asked the Maulvi Khairullah to give us his guidance. He gave a wise answer. He said that there is no conflict between the religious answer and the scientific answer. If a child is disabled, he said, it has been permitted by God. Yet the means by which the disability arises may be explained by medical science. But as for the eclipses and dead bodies, these are old superstitions which should not be believed.

Cllr : What did the respected Maulvi say about the parents' sins ?

Malik : He explained that God is the Source of Justice, therefore he does not punish the child for the sins of the parents. On the other hand, if the parents commit sins and abuse their bodies with intoxicants and foul practices, it is impossible for them to escape the penalty of ill health. This they may also pass on to their children. But in case the child is disabled, the means are appointed by God whereby the child may overcome his disabilities. You see, the Maulvi also has been listening to the broadcasts !

Cllr : The respected Maulvi made a wise reply. But tell me, Malik Sahib, what views were given about ways of preventing disability ?

Malik : There were a few people who did not think there was any way to prevent disabilities. But most people had some positive ideas. The greatest number said that there should be better health services, and that children should be immunised against disease. Some people said that the mother should eat plenty of good food during pregnancy, and should engage a properly trained Dai to supervise the birth. Also the mother should be careful about taking drugs during pregnancy, because some drugs can harm the baby.

Cllr : These are all good ideas. What else was suggested ?

Malik : Some people say that it is wise not to marry your close relative, because marriages between close relatives are more likely to produce disabled children. As you know, it is the custom among our people to marry a close relative, usually the first cousin. But it would be possible to marry a more distant cousin if that would prevent the children from being disabled.

Cllr : If at all possible it is better not to marry first cousins. Certainly there is a greater risk of having a disabled baby. Also if the parents already have a disabled child, they should get medical advice before having more children. Otherwise they may get several children all with the same disability. It is better for girls not to start having babies until they have reached 20 years. There is plenty of time to have a family of children. It will also prevent disabilities if women cease to bear children after the age of 35.

The people of this village have produced a long list of good ideas. Here are a few more : always get treatment as soon as possible, whether for a fever, a discharge from the ears, soreness of the eyes, or any other disease. If a child has a disability, take action as soon as possible along the lines discussed in previous broadcasts.

Accidents which cause disabilities can often be prevented by using common sense in the home. Parents should keep knives, guns and other dangerous objects, including medicines, out of reach of the children. The fire on which cooking is done should have a guard around it. If kerosene is stored in the home it should be in a safe container far from the fire. Wells should have a wall around the top, to prevent small children from falling in.

To eat good food, especially the mother and children, is an important way to prevent disabilities. In this way the body gains strength to resist diseases. Even when a child is disabled, he or she must eat plenty of good food, to stop the disability from getting worse. Babies should have milk from their mother's breast. The mother's milk helps them resist disease and disability.

Malik : I will bring these suggestions to the notice of the heads of families. This matter of preventing disabilities has roused a lot of interest. It is a matter that concerns everybody.

No. 13 : GOING TO SCHOOL

[School playground or classroom noises in background]

Interviewer: Over the past few weeks we have talked about children with various disabilities and how their families can help them to overcome their difficulties and to lead a normal life. For many children it is normal to go to school. Disabled children should also have this opportunity. Today we talk with Haji Abdul Qayum, Headmaster of a school in a small town. There are several disabled children in his school.

Headmaster: You are welcome ! We have had some disabled children attending school for many years. Most of them are getting on well with their studies.

Int: **What sort of disabilities do they have ?**

H.M.: All sorts of disabilities ! Let me get the list. *[Sound of opening drawer].* We have 280 boys attending school and there are 20 listed as disabled. Here you are : "Physically Disabled". Ahmad Gul, crippled leg; Amir Zada, lost his right arm in an accident; Anwar ul Haq, hunchback; and so on, there are a dozen of these boys. Then "Partly Blind": Fakhir Mohammed and Mohammad Abbas. One of them has an eye missing, the other has both his eyes but he sees very little. Then we have Imran who is deaf. The remaining disabled boys either have a severe stammer or they are mentally weak. In fact there are a few more children here who have some minor disability such as a mild speech problem or their eyesight is weak, but the disability does not cause any problems.

Int: Do you have some problems with the boys on the list ?

H.M.: It varies from child to child. Let me tell you how it started. Twelve years ago there was an important man of this town who had a disabled son, named Arif. He wanted Arif to go to school, but the rest of the family made objections.

They said, "The other children will tease the boy. He will be left out of their activities and will feel inferior. Suppose he falls down and gets hurt", and a lot of other objections. But the father came to see me and asked if his son could come, in spite of any difficulties. I decided to take Arif for a month's trial. I called the class teacher and told him to keep an eye on the situation, but not to make any special fuss over the boy. He must do his work just like any other boy, and must pay attention. But I told the class teacher to report to me if the other pupils were mocking or teasing. At the end of the month the father came again. I called the class teacher and we discussed the case.

He reported that Arif was doing well, he had made friends and was getting on with his work. During the first week the teacher had heard two other pupils making silly remarks to Arif. The teacher spoke to those two pupils and rebuked them. One boy accepted the rebuke, the other boy continued to make remarks. That boy was warned that if he continued he would be beaten. So then he understood that the matter was serious and he stopped his remarks.

From that day onwards, I have always been willing to consider admitting any disabled child to school. It is bad enough for them to be disabled; why should they also be kept out of school ? We give them the chance. If they take it, well and good. If they don't take the chance, if they are idle or mischievous, or if their family does not permit them to attend, that is their own affair.

Int: Do they fall behind in their work through their disability ?

H.M.: Some do, and then we give extra help. For example, one of the boys who is partly blind finds great difficulty reading his textbook. So I called an older boy, who is physically disabled, and said to him, "While your class fellows are out playing, you can make yourself useful by reading aloud to this young boy whose eyes are weak." I explained to him that it is a very honorable thing to help in this way. So the older boy agreed. In such a way he makes good use of his time and earns the respect of his fellow pupils.

To be frank, there have also been a few disabled pupils who were lazy boys. They believed that they could gain sympathy because of their disability, and therefore they need not do any work. The answer to them is the same that I give to any child who is lazy. If they will not work, they shall not occupy a seat in this school.

I am a little softer with the disabled children, because sometimes their families have failed to give them proper discipline at home; but we try to treat all the pupils equally. Several disabled boys have left school after completing their studies and now work in shops or in other jobs where they do as much work as the other employees. While they were here they learnt to work hard and to earn respect by their efforts. They did not seek any special concessions. Because of this they are now able to succeed in doing a normal job of work.

Int: Excellent ! Now, Headmaster, you said earlier on that a few pupils are deaf or mentally weak. How do those pupils succeed in learning their lessons ?

H.M.: In the case of deaf boys, they sit near the front of the class in order to make the best of whatever hearing power they still have. Their teachers give them a little extra help.

Sometimes the teacher writes or draws on the blackboard so that the deaf child can more easily understand. I have talked with the teachers about all of those disabled children. A teacher came to me once and complained. He said, "I have 40 other children in my class and I don't have any special training to teach this deaf child. If he fails his examinations, I should not be blamed." That teacher was very upset. So I talked to him calmly. I assured him that if he did his normal work then he could not be blamed for anything.

I could understand his point of view. I was a teacher for 18 years before I became Headmaster. Then I asked him: "What shall we do with the deaf boy ? Is he making trouble in the classroom ? Must we push him out of the school ?" Of course, the teacher did not wish to deprive the boy of his schooling. So he calmed down and agreed that the boy should continue in his class.

Int: Haji Sahib, what about the exams ? Do these disabled children take their class tests ? How are they promoted to the next class ?

H.M.: Most of them take exams and class tests, but a few are not able. In the case of one boy who is mentally weak, I promoted him with his class fellows because he is a big boy and good at sports though he learns very little. In another case of mental weakness with retarded growth, the boy has stayed down a class for a couple of years. He is the same size as boys much younger than himself, and it is easier for him to be with them rather than with the big boys.

You see, when I was a young teacher I thought that exam success was the only thing that mattered. Now I am an older man, I shall soon retire, and I have come to know that it is a good thing for all children to come to school and to learn something : to sit together and to help one another, to gain a sense of order and discipline, to be instructed in religion and to learn about their country and to study the lives of great heroes of old. It is true that the exam is important, but there are also other things that are important.

Look at the other pupils, who are not disabled. They see the blind beggar at the crossroads and the crippled beggar by the Bank and the mad man who shouts in the bazar. Their attitude towards those people is not good. But here in this school they are sitting next to some children with disabilities. They make friends with them. They learn that those disabled boys can study and can laugh and sing and tell jokes. They learn to accept one another. I tell you, that is not a subject for which there is any examination, but it is one of the most valuable lessons the pupils can ever learn.

Int.: Indeed, it is a most valuable lesson. Many thanks, Haji Sahib, for sparing your time to tell us about this work.

No. 14 : ROUND-UP

Counsellor : During the past three months we have been talking with families who have a handicapped child and we have discussed many ways in which life can be made easier and many skills can be learnt by these disabled children. We have looked at deaf and blind children, those with physical disabilities and the mentally retarded. Also children with speech defects, epilepsy, emotional problems and multiple disabilities. We listened to several parents of handicapped children talking about how they manage their problems at home. We heard from a village Malik, a Headmaster and some disabled adults.

Each of the disabilities is different, and each child and adult is different from every other one, and needs to be seen as an individual. Still, we noticed that some general principles remain the same for all handicapped people. This week we are going to take a broad look at what we have learnt from the previous broadcasts.

Attention should always focus on a person's abilities rather than on his disability. A child may be physically disabled but he can still see, hear, move some parts of his body and use his thinking power. We should concentrate on these positive things and build on them. In the case of a child, the family must observe closely what the child can do and encourage her to do as much as possible for herself - even if it takes longer at the beginning.

This does not require any special training or expertise in the family. What it does require is commonsense and an effort to see things from the child's point of view. In the case of a disabled adult, he or she should be encouraged to make full use of the unimpaired faculties and should be expected to contribute to family life and the normal life of the community.

Families often make the mistake of over-protecting their handicapped member. Doing this merely takes away the chance for the person to learn new skills. Some parents do not realise that every ability a child gets, she gets by learning. Normally as children grow up they learn so many things so quickly that it seems to be an automatic process. The new baby is helpless, yet with every passing month and year she learns hundreds of physical, social and verbal skills.

If this learning process is slowed down or halted by a disability, then the child needs extra help and encouragement to learn each step. The child should always be given praise for its efforts to learn new things. The child should be praised for making an effort, even if it is not very successful. Praise will encourage the child to make further efforts until success is achieved.

In addition to learning useful skills, it is unfortunately possible for children to learn bad behaviour if families are not careful. Children always seek to win their parents' attention. If they cannot do so by good behaviour they may turn to bad behaviour in an effort to be noticed. Even if they are punished, that may be a form of adult attention, so it may be ineffective in stopping bad behaviour.

An alternative is to observe closely the time and circumstance of the unwanted behaviour and to pay no attention to it when it occurs, but quickly substitute some more acceptable activity. Families need to be consistent in applying sanctions and helping their handicapped child learn what is acceptable. It is no use changing from one day to the next. Nor will it have a good effect if the parents say one thing and the grandparents or uncles say a different thing.

In listening to the reports from parents and from disabled adults it was evident that the best progress will be made if clear, realistic targets are aimed at. For example, a family might decide to help their physically disabled son take himself to the toilet independently. This requires several stages, including taking trousers down, squatting, cleaning and then doing up trousers again. Each action may require days or weeks to learn separately.

To take another example : a profoundly deaf girl may know how to make a series of signs to indicate her needs. Her family might decide as a target that they will teach her ten new signs to indicate particular meanings which are regularly needed in ordinary life. It is a good idea to keep a record of progress, either in writing or by committing to memory. By this means, the family and the disabled person can assure themselves that something new is being learnt as time goes on.

The rehabilitation of any handicapped child requires hard work, and clear thinking. There are no miracle cures or magical short cuts. There is no reason to waste money on fancy medicines or quack treatment. It makes sense for money to be spent on good, nutritious food. That gives a solid basis for good health for all the family. Proper nutrition also helps to prevent disabilities, by increasing the strength of the body in resisting disease. Good food will also help prevent the disabled child from getting into a worse state or from being listless and apathetic.

A great many disabilities can be prevented from ever occurring at all. Every child should be taken by her family for immunisation against the major diseases which can kill or disable her. If disease strikes, the sooner the treatment begins the better, to prevent any permanent damage resulting. If anyone in the family thinks that the baby or child is not developing normally, and might have some disability, that baby should be seen by a qualified health worker as soon as possible.

The time when a mother is delivering her baby is also an important time for preventing disabilities. The mother should be attended by an experienced midwife, and the umbilical cord must be cut with a blade that has been cleaned by heating over a flame. The best food for the baby is milk from the mother's breast. The baby gains more strength to resist disease and disability by being breast fed.

Disabilities are easier to prevent, and rehabilitation is easier to carry out, when the whole community is interested in its own health and the health of its children. Then everyone works together to keep the community water supply clean, to get the children immunised, to prevent accidents from disabling people and to stop deliberate harm being done in feuds between families.

Even if some people are disabled, the community can make life much easier for disabled people by involving them in ordinary life and treating them as normally as possible. Most families have at least one disabled member, so it in the interests of everyone to cooperate together in this matter.

NOTES ON PRESENTATION / ADAPTATION

1) The scripts were originally designed to last about 12 minutes, to fit into a 15 minute program slot with a signature tune and announcement at opening and close. An address may also be given, to which listeners could write for further information. There could be a short summary at the end of each broadcast, collecting together the main points which had been covered. In translation the scripts may turn out a little longer, due to differences in length of phrase required for expressing certain thoughts in other languages.

2) The question of identifying speakers as Doctor, Counsellor, Interviewer etc. and as parents, village leader or disabled adults, needs careful thought in each cultural situation and for each specific audience. In some cases the translator might change Interviewer to Doctor, while in other cases a move away from medical domination might suggest the use of Counsellor. It may be doubted whether parents of disabled children, or even the village head man, would be quite so free in arguing with a doctor.

3) More women's voices should be included if possible; there were local technical reasons for their being largely absent from the present scripts. It may also be possible to write in more disabled adults to give advice and counsel, depending partly on the sophistication of the audience. In some scripts (e.g. Nos 4, 5, 6) where the narrator reports the speech of other characters, this could be recast and a "recorded voice" of the other characters could be used, to give variety. (But see next Note).

4) It is unwise to pack in too much detail, too many different characters, or to expect many listeners to be able to seize hold of specific instructions. It would be more effective to repeat the broadcasts several times, and then to broadcast a further series going a little deeper. The important thing is to hook people's interest and help change the apathy and negative attitudes. If the attitudes improve, people will find their own solutions, whereas if attitudes remain negative then no amount of detail will have any effect. (As against this, some professionals may feel that important details are missing, inclusion of which would save time and prevent damage).

5) Translators and adaptors have full permission to make any changes and amendments they consider necessary and locally appropriate, while maintaining the internal consistency and coherence of the story line. Technical changes should of course be checked with experienced rehabilitation personnel before being broadcast. It is recommended that some means be devised for monitoring audience reactions in each place.

6) It is assumed that the translation / adaptation will be done by well-educated people having a good grasp of English and speaking the local language as their mother tongue. Wherever the English words are at all long, difficult or technical, they should be translated into the easiest and most familiar local idioms, in consultation with grass roots health workers who know how the ordinary people talk among themselves.

7) Some local adaptation may be considered advisable in specific scripts, for example :

No.2 The question may be raised about the advisability of marriage for mentally retarded persons. This depends very much on local customs and perceptions. But if the family believes from early on that the child will never get married, it is likely to distort their view of the child.

No.4 The story of the child with polio was criticised on the grounds that it could raise unrealistic hopes and expectations. However, it would not be difficult to rewrite the whole broadcast with details of a local child who makes good progress while still remaining slightly disabled. The outline of the Wilma Rudolph story is true, though the family details are of course an "imaginative reconstruction".

No.11 Mention of sexual development and abuse may be unacceptable in some regions. Some writers might prefer to devote an entire script to Speech Therapy.

No.14 The Round Up could easily be adapted for two or three voices, including for example a disabled adult. It is also an opportunity to pick up anything which may have been lacking or confusing in the earlier broadcasts, if some audience reaction has been received. On the other hand, if the programming requirement is for 3 months, 13 weeks, the Round Up may be considered dispensible !

8) Dissemination by tape-recorded cassette may make the material more permanently accessible, especially in areas where literacy is weak or radio reception poor. Cassettes could also be used as discussion starters in a variety of settings. An audio-visual presentation could be achieved by the use of appropriate slides, either from existing slide sets or by photographing a series of drawings to match the scripts.

The following story, or any adaptation of it, may be used in written publicity or explanation for the rehabilitation broadcasts.

TWISTING THE PROFESSIONAL'S ARM

"Can you see one more family ? The child seems to be retarded and mildly spastic, maybe with hearing loss. They've been in the city for three days going from doctor to doctor. They have to leave in one hour's time to catch the bus to get them home in the north by tomorrow night, otherwise the man will lose his job."

The specialist flashes back over 20 years of experience : the years of training, years of practising; the slow build-up of professional involvement with parents in home-based rehabilitation.

Children of all shapes and sizes, every type of impairment; families with all sorts of reactions and emotional tangles. Can this experience be compacted into a 35 minute interview, after which the family could return to their village and help their child without any further advice?

The specialist thinks to herself, "It can hardly be done; perhaps it's a waste of time". The receptionist is waiting for an answer. The family sits glumly in the corridor. Father has already lost a week's pay in this visit to the city, a desperate bid to find help, advice, a "cure" for the child who cannot do the things that other children do. They have to leave very soon or they will lose their place on the bus.

If the man does not get home in time, his job will go. The boss was against him taking time off. "Why waste time on that daft kid? . You'll find no help in the city." The family suddenly reaches a decision. They will get no help here. They rise and file out, bare feet making no sound across the carpeted foyer. By the time the receptionist comes to find them, they have turned the corner of the street.

The "daft kid" can sit in the corner of their hut, gurgling to himself. At least father will keep his job, so that there will be food in the pot and enough money to send one or two children to school and to buy medicines.

The receptionist reports back, "They've gone".

Now it is the rehabilitation counsellor who makes a sudden decision. There have been too many quiet, tired, desperately poor fathers and mothers, spending their meagre savings to find an answer in the city and going away empty handed and heavy hearted.

"Either I will find something to say to those people, some way to communicate with them, or I'll give up this job. I'll retire and grow roses in my garden."

The specialist hurries her receptionist out to the car and they speed to the bus station. The villagers have already boarded their bus. The driver is revving his engine before starting on the long grind to the mountains in the north. As they recognise the receptionist, the family shrink together in terror. They fear they will be made to pay a large sum of money just for entering the doors of the clinic. Their eyes are wide with anguish.

The specialist summons from her memory a little of the northern dialect she learnt many years ago from her old nanny whose home was in the mountains. "May your heart and liver be at peace ! You graced my humble clinic today".

The other northern passengers on the bus turn to stare at this well-dressed, educated woman, who is speaking the dialect of the mountains.

"But quickly, for the motor is turning, tell me : do you hear the radio in your mountain village ? The villagers nod dumbly, unsure still if they will escape unmolested. "Then I will speak to you over the radio, if God permits. Let two moons pass, then listen each night to the Government channel. You, together with any others whose child is different."

The driver blasts his horn, the bus shudders, and the specialist leaps down, with a two-month deadline to meet.

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